

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 171106

EXDIS, PLS PASS ASST. SECY. HOLBROOKE ONLY UPON ARRIVAL

FOLLOWING REPEAT OF TOKYO 12285 SENT ACTION SECSTATE 6 JUL.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 12285

EXDIS

FOR SECRETARY VANCE

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE

PASS WHITE HOUSE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: XE, PGOV
SUBJECT: FONMIN SONODA REPORT ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH
VIETNAMESE VICE FONMIN PHAN HIEN

AT A DINNER WHICH I GAVE IN HONOR OF FOREIGN MINISTER AND
MRS. SONODA ON JULY 5, MINISTER SONODA ASKED IF HE COULD
SPEAK WITH ME PRIVATELY BEFORE THE DINNER. AT THE MEETING
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IN THE LIBRARY OF THE RESIDENCE ALONG WITH HIS INTER-
PRETER, HE GAVE ME A RUN-DOWN OF HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH
PHAN HIEN, VICE FOREIGN MINISTER OF VIETNAM. THE FOLLOW-
ING POINTS WERE MADE:

1. WHEN SONODA ASKED HIEN DIRECTLY WHAT WAS THE REASON
FOR VIETNAM JOINING CEMA, HIEN REPLIED THAT VIETNAM

HAD BEEN AN OBSERVER IN CEMA, BUT THAT BECAUSE OF THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE SOCIALIST STATES AND VIETNAM'S NEED FOR CONTINUED ASSISTANCE, IT WAS FELT ADVISABLE AT THIS TIME TO JOIN UP. HE STRESSED QUITE STRONGLY THAT THIS WOULD NOT AFFECT VIETNAM'S BASIC NONALIGNED POLICY.

2. HIEN INDICATED HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE US-JAPAN MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY BECAUSE HE WAS CONVINCED IT WAS FOR THE DEFENSE OF JAPAN ONLY.

3. HIEN INDICATED APPROVAL OF ASEAN AND THE FUKUDA DOCTRINE AND WAS PLEASED THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN WORKED OUT BETWEEN JAPAN AND VIETNAM OVER THE FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF SOUTH VIETNAM. HE URGED THAT JAPAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

4. HE VERY MUCH WANTS TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE WEST AND ESPECIALLY WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE IS AWARE OF THE OPPOSITION IN CONGRESS AND AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, BUT HE SAID THAT NORMAL RELATIONS ARE VERY IMPORTANT AND THE MATTER OF COMPENSATION MIGHT, WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, BECOME MOOT. HOWEVER, AID IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF CURRENT HEALTH, ECONOMIC AND OTHER CONDITIONS IN VIETNAM.

5. VIETNAM WOULD LIKE TO GET TOGETHER WITH CHINA TO
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SETTLE THE PRESENT DISPUTE, AND THEY WOULD NOT BE AVERSE TO A THIRD PARTY OFFERING ITS GOOD OFFICES TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE TWO. I RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE "THIRD PARTY" COULD WELL BE JAPAN BUT I AM NOT SURE THAT JAPAN WOULD BE WILLING TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY UNLESS BOTH PARTIES REQUESTED JAPAN TO DO SO.

6. PHAN HIEN ASSURED SONODA THAT THERE WAS NO RUSSIAN ACTIVITY AT CAM RANH BAY AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NONE. VIETNAMESE POLICY WOULD BE ONE OF STRICT NONALIGNMENT AND THEY HAD NO INTENTION OF OPENING CAM RANH BAY TO ANY FOREIGN POWER.

MINISTER SONODA ASKED ME IF I WOULD CONVEY THESE REMARKS TO WASHINGTON AND TO STATE TO THE PRESIDENT HOW SERIOUS HE THOUGHT THE SITUATION WAS IN VIETNAM, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT DIFFICULT RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CHINA AND VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. REGARDING THE LATTER, HE STATED THAT PHAN HIEN HAD SAID THE VIETNAMESE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS FROM CAMBODIA AND REFERRED TO THE PRESENT REGIME THERE AS "OLD ALLIES".

I ASSURED FONMIN SONODA THAT I WOULD SEND THE GIST OF OUR DISCUSSION TO THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY VANCE BUT I EMPHASIZED THAT PHAN HIEN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE OPPOSITION OF CONGRESS TO EARLY RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF US-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS WAS CORRECT, AND I COULD OFFER LITTLE HOPE. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT HE DISCUSS HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH PHAN HIEN WITH THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN, MR. FU HAO. IN REPLY, HE SAID HE WOULD DO SO AND ALSO WITH THE CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER IN PEKING LATER THIS MONTH. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD PHAN HIEN THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH ME THIS EVENING AS HE WAS COMING TO DINNER AT THE RESIDENCE.

I DO NOT THINK THAT SONODA IS EASILY DISTURBED BUT I DO
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FEEL THAT HE SENSES THE POSSIBILITY OF A FLAREUP IN INDO-CHINA IF THE VIETNAMESE/CHINESE AND THE VIETNAMESE/CAMBODIAN DIFFICULTIES ARE NOT RESOLVED. OUR PRIVATE CONFERENCE LASTED ABOUT FORTY MINUTES.

WHILE I AM SENDING THIS MESSAGE AS FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA REQUESTED, I DO NOT SEE WHAT THE UNITED STATES CAN DO ABOUT THESE MATTERS AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT, IF ALLOWED TO DRAG ON, THE CONSEQUENCES COULD BE VERY GRAVE. THE SITUATION COULD SPREAD BEYOND INDO-CHINA AND THE PEACE AND STABILITY WHICH HAS BEEN MAINTAINED IN THIS AREA FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS COULD BE BROKEN, WITH DANGEROUS AND UNPREDICTABLE EFFECT.
MANSFIELD

UNQUOTE VANCE

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